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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KAWC](#) [KCRM](#) [KJUS](#) [BK](#)
SUBJECT: BOSNIA: LATEST DEVELOPMENTS ON SREBRENICA-RELATED
WAR CRIMES CASES

REF: A. SARAJEVO 1087
[B](#). SARAJEVO 1236
[C](#). SARAJEVO 1476

[1](#)1. (U) SUMMARY: In the past several weeks, the State Court reached verdicts on two Srebrenica-related war crimes cases we have been tracking (Ref A). On November 6, a first instance panel found Mladen Blagojevic, a former member of the RS Military Police who had been deported from the U.S., guilty of crimes against humanity, and handed him a seven-year prison sentence. However, to the dismay of victim groups, the Court acquitted three co-defendants due to lack of evidence. Separately, on October 22, another first instance panel found Vaso Todorovic, a former member of the Second Sekovici Special Police, guilty of crimes against humanity. Todorovic received six years in prison as a result of a plea agreement he reached with the State Prosecutor's Office. Moreover, on November 5, the State Investigation and Protection Agency (SIPA), acting on the orders of the State Prosecutor's Office, arrested two men in Zvornik who are believed to have ordered and supervised the murder of 1,200 Bosniak men near Srebrenica in 1995. END SUMMARY.

Court Issues Verdicts in Two Srebrenica-Related Cases

[1](#)2. (SBU) A first instance panel at the State Court on November 6 found Mladen Blagojevic guilty of murdering five Bosniaks and of mistreating Bosniak detainees near Srebrenica in 1995, but acquitted three other co-defendants. Blagojevic, a former member of the RS Army's military police platoon in Bratunac who was deported from the U.S. in 2006, was convicted of crimes against humanity; he received and is expected to appeal a seven-year prison sentence. Three co-defendants -- Zdravko Bozic (who, like Blagojevic, was deported from the U.S. in 2006), Zoran Zivanovic, and Zeljko Zaric -- were released because prosecutors had not proven to the Court that the three had participated in the murders and the cruel mistreatment of Bosniak detainees. Following the verdicts, the media carried the statements of representatives of the Mothers of Srebrenica, who accused the lead prosecutor, a British secondee, of botching the case. However, contacts at the State Prosecutor's Office told us that they were not surprised by the acquittals given the lack of strong evidence against the three men.

[1](#)3. (U) Similarly, another first instance panel at the State Court on October 22 found Vaso Todorovic guilty of aiding and abetting crimes against humanity perpetrated against Bosniaks in and around Srebrenica in 1995. Todorovic, a former member of the Second Sekovici Special Police, had helped expel

Bosniak women and children from Potocari and detain Bosniak men who were later killed in the Kravica warehouse. (Note: As noted in Ref A, Todorovic was initially indicted in the Kravica case for genocide, but his case was later separated out after he entered into a plea agreement with the State Prosecutor's Office. Todorovic was charged with the lesser charge of crimes against humanity in exchange for his testimony against individuals who had direct participation in the murders. End note) In a press release, the Court noted that, Todorovic's testimony had helped it prove that plans to commit war crimes against Bosniaks were formulated earlier than the ICTY had found. The Court explained that Todorovic's relatively lenient sentence -- six years imprisonment -- was due to his cooperation with the State Prosecutor's Office in the Kravica case.

SIPA Arrests Two Individuals For Zvornik War Crimes

14. (U) The State Prosecutor's Office is continuing to make progress on other Srebrenica-related cases. On November 5, the State Investigation and Protection Agency (SIPA), acting on the State Prosecutor's orders, arrested two suspects near Zvornik on genocide charges. The two men, Momir Pelemis and Slavko Peric, had served in the First Zvornik Battalion of the Army of Republika Srpska, part of the Drina Corps. Pelemis had been a deputy commander, and Peric, an assistant security commander. Prosecutors believe that the two men had ordered and supervised the arrest and murder of 1,200 Bosniak men near Srebrenica in 1995.

Comment

15. (U) The developments in the Blagojevic and Todorovic cases, as well as the recent SIPA arrests, underscore the priority the State Prosecutor's Office is giving to Srebrenica-related and other high profile war crimes cases. Both the State Court and the State Prosecutor's Office are aware that, while they scored a major win with the Kravica case this past summer, they must still show sustained, tangible results in hopes of increasing public confidence in their ability to ensure speedy and fair trials. Unfortunately, as noted previously in Refs B and C, increasing public confidence remains an uphill battle given the often unfair criticism the State Court and the State Prosecutor's Office continue to receive from victims groups and politicians, and the biased, selective coverage of war crimes cases by most media outlets.

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